

# SUMMARIUM

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## HIGHER EDUCATION REFORMS

Ulrich Teichler: *Main Questions Regarding European Higher Education Reforms: The Opinion of a Higher Education Researcher*. The article presents and analyses the main areas and topics which have, to varying degrees and with changing content, dominated higher educational reforms in the past thirty years. The author points to three broad topics. The first topic continuously in the spotlight of politics and research is the expansion of higher education, its trends and its possible interpretations. All approaches to this question relevant to our present and future examine the roles higher education fulfills in the formation of knowledge-based society. This approach brings forward some main topics for discussion: the growing expectations towards relevant knowledge-transfer; setting the priorities between accomplishing quality in the top or across the expanded higher education as a whole; whether the strict professional qualification, a broader professional knowledge or the employability should be the main priority as a philosophy behind the curricula; which are the proper teaching and learning methods in the massified and "exhausted" higher education; how can lifelong learning be accomplished and generalized? The second main topic area refers to the changing content of governmental control and institutional management, and their means to tackle the problems. In sharp contrast with the main trends of strong control and supervision of the first reforms in the 1960's and 1970's, today's reform is characterized by the diminishing role of governments. On the level of institutional leadership one can observe a shift towards managerial attitudes, due to a tightening in the economic environment. Since the beginning of 1980's, evaluation of higher education have became widespread. Evaluation systems are diverse, especially across countries. The reason lies in the fact that measurement of performance in higher education is an extremely delicate and difficult process, and it is hard to reach a consensus about the methods. The third topic discussed is internationalization and globalization. One aspect of this refers to crossing borders, physical mobility, partnerships and knowledge-transfer. Another aspect regards internalization and globalization as a framework for all spheres of higher education. Universities will develop different strategies and forms of leadership once they are set in an international framework, rather than in a national one. The author illustrates his theses, pointing to the multiplicity of possible solutions to similar problems.

Robert D. Reisz: *Isomorphism, Conflict and Creativity. Higher Education in Central-Eastern Europe of the 1990's*. The study presents the results of a research carried out by the author with the financial and institutional support of the Higher Education Research Institute of Martin Luther University in Halle-Wittenberg. The research compared six countries from the region, and looked for similarities in higher education reforms following the political turnovers around 1990. (The research comprised the following countries: Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Poland, Hungary, Romania, Slovakia.) The first part of the study sums up the history of higher education in these countries, beginning from the Middle Ages through the development of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, till the radical happenings of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, highlighting the similar traces and influences. The second part of the study is reserved to statistical analysis of longitudinal data. The main conclusion is, that there is high correlation between the data on student numbers in the second part of the 20<sup>th</sup> century across countries. These results support and complement the fact concluded from other statistical and historical data, that there is a high degree of homogeneity across higher education sectors in the region. The third part of the study

aims to answer the question: why did the similarities persist even after centralized political coordination across the region ceased to exist. One interesting thing about homogeneity is, that even the post 1990 innovations are relatively similar. The theoretical background of the analysis is given by the neoinstitutionalist approach. The author uses the term isomorphism comparing the events with different types of isomorphism. It results, that the period between 1948 and 1990 was obviously a forced isomorphism, but this influence did not totally disappear after 1990. (On the contrary, it even became stronger during the past 4–5 years, due to the pan-European regulations regarding the evolving European Higher Educational Area.) The main mechanism of the 1990's was, however, the so-called mimetic isomorphism. Institutions made an attempt to copy a model from outside, in some cases the not-yet existing model of the European higher education. Even a third form of isomorphism, the so-called normative isomorphism could be traced. For the East-Central European higher education systems the common norm and value was set forth by the Humboldtian university ideal, which induced them the same institutional changes. Finally, the author states that, even if his study pointed to the homogeneity of systems in some respects, the even more interesting research question would be the one that seeks for the causes of differences among them.

Attila Kotán and István Polónyi: *The Role Of The World Bank in the Development of Hungarian Higher Education*. The article presents the objectives and results of two credit programs of the World Bank aimed at the development of Hungarian higher education after the change of regime. The first credit came in 1991 and along with the Hungarian contribution was placed in the "Joining up the European Higher Education" Fund. The reason for this solution – new even for the World Bank – was that the preparations for the program coincided with the change of regime, and one could not expect a well-based strategy of higher education development from the government at that point. The World Bank accepted this situation, they agreed that the objectives of the program could be better achieved if the funds were distributed according to the priorities of the program by a more or less independent advisory board in a system of application-based competition. The composition of the advisory board was such that the interests of larger universities mostly prevailed, therefore one can not be surprised that the program – in spite of its several accomplishments – could only achieve a small part of the rationalizing objectives it set forth in the beginning. The main characteristics of the sphere did not change, its lobby successfully preserved the system. The second credit-agreement with the World Bank was signed in 1998. As a policy-oriented credit, its key objectives coincided more or less with the first one, some focal points have changed, however. In the case of growing incomes, there was a growing emphasis on tuition fees. The essence of the program was the project of institutional development, bringing about important investment sources as well. The new government in 1998 radically changed some objectives of the project – like the one referring to tuition fees – by revising the policy letter and supplementing the agreement. The new government started to implement the revised program, but quitted it by the second half of its mandate, saying that "too strict conditions and too high commissions" obliged them to. The government partly complemented the credit funds, and assured the financial conditions for the first phase of the development project, but later one could observe the gradual decrease in finances. Still, an important merit of the program was that it created the necessary infrastructural conditions for the expansion of higher education. The study concludes in saying that the contribution of the World Bank to the development of Hungarian higher education lies in assuring a surplus of funds for the higher education that allowed for the modernization of its infrastructure and technical devices. On the other hand, the programs have only slightly contributed – on the level of appearances – to the economic and institutional rationalization. The degree system did not get closer to the developed European ones, nor to European economic demands. The way higher education institutions function depends on the compromise among different academic interest-groups, and the economic rationality is only a secondary aspect. The politically oriented ministries are led by short-term political interests, therefore client-accumulation by distribution is their most important task to achieve. In this framework the long-term development strategies – together with the World Bank policies – are in collapse.

Ildikó Hrubos: *Today's Reform: Creating the European Higher Education Area*. This article examines the so-called Bologna process in the context of the reforms of higher education in advanced European countries in the 1960's. It raises the questions: how do new developments fit into the row of reforms, what are the conclusions drawn from the previous successes and failures. It already ex-

ists a well-defined system of concepts and methodology regarding the higher education reforms seen as social programs. From this point of view the present reform can be considered radical, because changing and harmonizing the degree system on a European level (which is the most important element of this reform) asks for a completely new philosophy and practice. Meanwhile, this reform is extremely "wide", comprising most parts of the institution-system, and actually influencing the system as a whole. The horizontal magnitude of changes is unprecedented in the history of higher education reforms, because it concerns the whole sector, each of its institutions and geographically the entire continent. Past history has shown that this sector is capable of great transformations, it can survive crises, but it can also be characterized by a high level of inertia, and by forceful resistance when it comes to defend itself from actions endangering its interests. The reform aiming EHEA is only at its beginning, therefore no evaluation can yet be made. However, we can consider the chances, we can take into account the critical points. The study tackles the following topics. Mobility is considered a central value in the declarations. The question is, will the motivation be strong enough to mobilize huge masses of students in Europe, where the legacy regarding physical mobility is falling far behind of that in the United States, considered an example and rival. The topic of financing, strictly connected to the previous topic, practically did not even occur in the declarations. Expanding the sphere of higher education can bring the autocracy of traditional forms of higher education to an end. The possibility of recognizing formally not accredited programs will raise several practical and theoretical problems. One of the objectives of the reform is to assure social equity in higher education. The degree system allowing multiple exits, the lifelong learning initiatives indeed provide the possibility to restart, to continue the learning process. The EHEA will, however, also contribute to the development of new (international) levels of social selection. Marking off the boundaries of degrees in the linear system is difficult both in educational-curricular and labor-market terms. Determining the functions of the first degree is especially difficult and controversial, which is perceptible even in the way official documents have treated these questions over the past years. A growing attention is given to institutions. An outstanding contradiction lies in the fact that the reform started from the top, but the implementation is expected to come from below, from the level of institutions. Moreover, when it comes to the development of concrete curricula, the autonomy of the disciplines is at stake. As the reform is unfolding, questions regarding the content and quality come forth, but the convincing, legitimate systems of evaluation, quality assurance and accreditation are still to be worked out. While the basic aim of the reform is to assure a more rationalized human resource management, the potential employers did not yet have a word to say.

Tamás Kozma: *Change Agents. Minority Higher Education Initiatives in Central Europe*. The article of Tamás Kozma analyses the "genealogical myths" of thirteen higher education institutions, inquiring: in what circumstances did they come into being and what are the regularities around the birth of the new minority/multilingual higher education institutions in Central and Eastern Europe in the 1990's. The author states that the initiators of these institutions are either (minority or regional) political/interest-safeguarding organisms, or ecclesiastic organizations. The contribution of ecclesiastic organizations is essential especially in the eastern part of the region. In the case of minority institutions, the key initiators always belong to the local or regional elite. They can only be successful if they acquire political assignments (local authorities) and they obtain the support of particular local groups. Their endeavor to establish new institutions is presented on the political scene as minority rights protection and/or as a regional development strategy. For a minority institution to be created in a particular place in the right moment, not only adequate conditions are necessary, but also someone who takes the initiative, funds the institution and sustains it. This person is the change agent, whose role is to give voice to the demands of the masses, to interpret the birth of the institution as a political act, to estimate its opportunities and win the opinion of the majority in favor of one possible solution. The change agents are hidden, acting from behind and are difficult to get in touch with. Their style is similar to that of the charismatic leaders. They accept the risks of taking initiatives, and build on previous successes. This way they are able to win majority support and they can also make their democratic environment accept the institution funded by them.

Károly Barakonyi: *The Structure of the Multi-Steps Degree System*. The study points out that joining the European Higher Education Area is a necessary effort towards establishing a uniform and competitive system of higher education in Hungary. The cardinal point of this problem is the creation of

a uniform multi-steps degree system. The author takes into account all the elements of the two-steps degree system: the input requirements of each step, the requirements concerning the content of each step, the expected competencies on the output level, the learning careers satisfying the needs for student mobility, the links among the steps and between the degrees and the labor-market, the starting and exit points. The study also mentions the exceptions to the rule in introducing linear degree-system: where there is no mass education, and only a limited number of students are involved, there is no need (or it is even dangerous) to ask for the linear two-steps model. Such are the university-level studies in arts, the medical education, dentistry, pharmaceutical and veterinary education. However, due to its more direct relationship with the world of labor-market and mass society, legal education is recommended to be transformed into the two-step degree system. The positive outcomes would be the greater student and teacher mobility, a wider European outlook, diplomas allowing a greater employability on the EU labor-market, and improvement of the competitiveness of the country. Among the expected negative outcomes would be the significant energy and involvement expected from executives, the risks of quality drop because of a new, unknown system without any traditions whatsoever, the uncertainties brought about by change and felt by the teaching staff, the possible brain drain provoked by the intensified student mobility, and the substantial costs involved for the governments. The author finally concludes, that there is no need to prescribe the structure of vocational higher education or of special vocational training courses, and there is no need to encounter these. In their case the needs and their unneccessity is completely determined by social demands and their licensing should be linked solely to quality standards.

(Text of Ildikó Hrubos & István Polónyi – translated by Ágota Szentannai)

## REFORMEN DES HOCHSCHULWESENS

Ulrich Teichlers Aufsatz zum Thema *Die Reform des Hochschulwesens: Meinungen eines Hochschulforschers* präsentiert und untersucht die Hauptgebiete und Themen die seit über drei Jahrzehnten mit zeitweise verschiedenen Schwerpunkten und Inhalten im Mittelpunkt der Reform der akademischen Ausbildung stehen. Der Autor bestimmt drei dieser umfangreichen Gebiete. Das erste, sich fortlaufend im Mittelpunkt der Aufmerksamkeit der Forschung und der Politik befindende Thema ist die Ausweitung des Hochschulwesens, die Trends dieser Ausweitung und deren Interpretation. Der sowohl für die Gegenwart als auch für die Zukunft relevante Ansatz versucht die Rolle des Hochschulwesens in der Schaffung einer Wissengesellschaft zu formulieren. In dieser Hinsicht kommen folgende Diskussionsthemen auf: das Bedürfnis nach der Vermittlung relevanten Wissens wächst von Tag zu Tag; was ist wichtig(er): Qualität an der Spitze oder Qualität im ganzen Querschnitt des ausgeweiteten Hochschulwesens? Welcher Philosophie soll der Lehrplan folgen: sollen die professionelle Qualifikation, eine ausgeweitete professionelle Ausbildung oder die späteren Erwerbsmöglichkeiten die Hauptrolle spielen? Welche Lern- und Lehrmethoden können im immer größere Massen anziehenden und daher erschöpften Hochschulwesen angewandt werden? Und schließlich, wie kann das lebenslange Lernen verwirklicht werden? Der zweite Themenkreis umfaßt den variablen Inhalt und die Problemlösungsmethoden des staatlichen Führungssystems und der einzelnen institutionellen Leitungen. Der Haupttrend ist ein Schrumpfen der Rolle der Regierung, im scharfen Gegensatz zu der strikten Kontrolle die in den 60-er und 70-er Jahren so charakteristisch war. Auf der Ebene der institutionellen Leitung ist in Anbetracht des vom wirtschaftlichen Milieu ausgeübten Druckes eine Verbreitung der managementorientierten Führung erkennbar. Seit Beginn der 80-er Jahre hat sich die Evaluierung des Hochschulwesens weltweit verbreitet. Die nationalen Bewertungssysteme sind häufig sehr unterschiedlich. Diese Unterschiede sind durch die komplexe Problematik, die eine Bewertung der Leistung des Hochschulwesens darstellt, und durch die dementsprechende Schwierigkeit mit der ein Konsens über die Bewertungsmethoden entsteht, zu erklären. Das dritte Gebiet ist die Internationalisierung und Globalisierung. Einerseits bedeuten diese eine grenzüberschreitende, physische Mobilität, Kooperation und Wissenübergabe. Andererseits jedoch beeinflußt die Internationalisierung und Globalisierung jegliche Gebiete des Hochschulwesens. Die Universitäten gestalten ihre Strategien und Führungssysteme anders wenn der Kontext nicht mehr national, sondern